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THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS'

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"And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day" (ISAIAH 58: 10).

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NEW YEAR'S GREETING.

BY PRESIDENT GEORGE ALBERT SMITH.

AT the beginning of a new year I greet my brethren and sisters of the European mission and sincerely invoke the favor of the Lord to be upon you and accompany you henceforth. To the faithful elders who have ministered in love and patience and have sought diligently to disseminate the truth I extend hearty congratulations. Your efforts to serve others will react in blessings on your heads; and the sacrifices you appear to make will prove to be treasures laid up in heaven, that shall await you when life's labor is complete. I am grateful for the assistance you have rendered the cause and for relieving me of many burdens that without your help would have been most difficult to bear. It has never been my fortune to labor with men more willing or obedient, or who take greater pleasure in doing good. The fruits of your efforts are already manifest in the improved condition of the mission and in the increased number of honest hearts now investigating the gospel.

The lady missionaries have rendered excellent service. Some of them cannot be excelled for faithfulness and devotion to the cause of the Master. In their gentle, earnest, womanly way they have gained the confidence of good women and of men also, and have had the satisfaction of imparting to them a knowledge of the plan of salvation, which has resulted in their conversion to the gospel. The further reward of your labors will overtake you in due time. The local conference and branch presidents have not been negligent in looking after their flocks. The labors of some of these have been excellent and most praiseworthy. With a sure knowledge of the truth, they have rejoiced in bearing witness of it, and not afraid to declare it wherever opportunity

offered. They have worked with an earnest desire to inspire confidence and humility among the members and in weeding out all iniquity. Verily, they will have their reward.

While doubt and spiritual distress, anxiety and fear are afflicting mankind everywhere, the gospel has continued to be spread abroad by our labors and thousands of faithful souls have been added to the Church. These have received a testimony from the Lord that his work is established again on the earth and, like his disciples of old, they have been willing to forsake all and follow him. The gospel has been offered to the gentiles for almost a hundred years. The time is rapidly approaching when it will be preached to the Jews, who are to gather in from their long dispersion, upon the land of their inheritance. Palestine is to be inhabited as a city without walls and the glory of the Lord will rest upon his chosen people, when they repent of their sins and turn unto him.

From Norway to Italy and throughout the British Isles missionary activity is now increasing and is being rewarded. The Lord is removing the barriers that impede the progress of his work, and is preparing the way for the preaching of his holy word to all nations. Not anything can stay his servants in the discharge of their duty, for his all-powerful arm is made bare to sustain the faithful and overthrow the wicked. In America the Church is progressing rapidly, despite the efforts of misguided people to discredit it. Its members are esteemed for their virtues as they become known; and some of its faithful sons are being signally honored in the nation. Thousands of tourists passing through Salt Lake City monthly are quickly divested of their unjustified prejudices, by coming in direct contact with the Latter-day Saints in their daily lives. These strangers live in all parts of the world and carry to their homes good impressions and a desire to refute the wicked stories circulated about our people, speaking of us as we are. They then judge us by our fruits, from personal observation, and such information, as they impart it, can have but one effect, and that most favorable to us. All men will not accept the gospel even though we teach it to them. They must first have a desire to know the truth and become possessed of courage to separate from their friends and the world, and to endure the scorn that is sure to follow them.

The gospel that the Savior taught, we teach, and it is just as unpopular to-day as it was when he said: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen ye out of the world therefore the world hateth you." * * * "The time cometh, that whoso killeth you will think that he doeth God service." That was the condition then, and in this day His disciples have met the same

opposition and hatred. Satan knows the gospel is restored; that we have it and hates us for it, but cannot overcome us if we do right. He will succeed in blinding the eyes of many, even of the honorable men of the world, thereby preventing them from obtaining a knowledge of the truth, to their irreparable loss. Those who assail us, being so blinded, do not know they are opposing the Almighty; but we know it and can afford to be patient. In his own time and way he will mete out justice; to reward the faithful and punish those who wickedly oppose the truth.

It is for saints to overcome evil by good. We will not obtain celestial glory unless we earn it. The opportunity is given us to do that in this life by accepting and living the gospel of our Lord, but in no other way. "God will not be mocked." He has defined the plan and men must follow it to obtain exaltation; He will not accept man-made forms and ceremonies in lieu thereof. The world lieth in sin and groaneth in iniquity. The devil is cheating the souls of men, and instead of turning from their evil ways to the true and living God, they are plunging headlong to sure destruction. Let us "eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die," appears to be the disposition of the multitude; and even where gross sins do not degrade, the sins of unbelief and ignorance continue to hamper and condemn. The Scripture is being fulfilled which declares that "The wisdom of their wise men shall perish and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." The greatest statesmen of the world are discovering day by day their inability to cope with the appalling conditions. They appear to think they can or should legislate our ills away. This is not possible. It is repentance not legislation that is needed to bring peace to the people of our distraught planet. The duty of the Latter-day Saints is plain. It is to teach repentance, by precept and example, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. This duty may not always be a pleasant one, but it is ours and we dare not shirk it. The signs of the times proclaim a continuation of unrest and sorrow. The power of the evil one will be manifest among the earth's inhabitants until it is broken. That time is before us, but we and those following after us, will survive it.

I urge my brethren and the saints to renewed energy in discharging the obligations that rest upon you, and I shall co-operate with you to the full extent of my power. Conform your lives to the teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ and when calamities threaten you will feel the support of his all powerful arm. Make your homes the abiding place of the spirit of the Lord; let them be holy places, where the adversary cannot come: listen to the still small voice prompting you to works of righteousness. It is my prayer for one and all that you be not swerved from the path that leads to the knowledge and power of God, the heritage of the faithful, even life everlasting.

JEDEDIAH M. GRANT.

[In the kind reception accorded, by readers of the *Millennial Star*, to the biographical sketch of President George Albert Smith, published in 1919—a number having expressed their interest and pleasure in reading it—I take courage in revising the following sketch of the life of President Jedediah M. Grant, thinking it will meet with similar approval. This I prepared and published in the *Contributor*, in the year 1883, and while it does not meet my desire to see a full and satisfactory biography of this great champion and leader among the Latter-day Saints, it may serve, while conveying its wholesome lessons of faith and courage, to perhaps supply the foundation of an ample and more perfect review of his wonderful career in time to come.

Though President Heber J. Grant was born a few days before the death of his distinguished father, it has been often remarked by those who knew them both that they were much alike in mental and spiritual temperament; their zeal and unflagging labors in preaching and publishing the word of the Lord to saints and sinners, often alarmed their associates, lest they undertook more than their physical strength could sustain. It is probably true that President Jedediah M. Grant did so, and his life was shortened thereby. His distinguished son, now president of the Church, and already twenty-four years older than his father was at his death, ascribes his ability to meet all demands upon his strength to the providence of the Lord in healing him when he has been sick, and to the practice of playing, part of the time, for the recreation and recuperation of his physical powers.—Junius F. Wells.]

I.

The lives of many of the prominent elders of Israel are remarkable for their large experience and the maturity they attained in their youth. Joseph Smith, the Prophet of God, brought forth the fulness of the gospel, organized the Church, revealed every principle essential to its perpetuation on earth and the salvation of the human family, preached the truth to thousands and prepared the way for it to reach all nations; administered the sacred ordinances of the house of the Lord, and entered into the practice of every principle he revealed, before he was thirty-nine years of age. He received his first vision when he was fourteen, and in less than twenty-five years after sealed the wonderful testimony of his brief life with the blood of a martyr. The hard struggle of his associates to establish the work of the Lord upon the earth was made before they, as a rule, had passed the meridian of life. Their active labors in the ministry, in receiving and spreading the principles of the gospel to the people, caused them to grow rapidly in the knowledge of the truth and gave them wonderful life-lessons to develop the ability they were endowed with and

cause them to become men of character, before they had hardly passed the portals of boyhood. Notably, in this respect, we remember the career of President George A. Smith, who was a preacher of the gospel at seventeen and one of the Twelve Apostles at twenty-one.

Scarcely less remarkable was the rapid growth and development of President Jedediah M. Grant. It is said of him, by those who remember him well and were most familiar with his life and ministry, that he ever impressed those who knew him with the maturity of his judgment, the thoroughness of his discipline, as related to his own culture and occupations, and the perfection he had reached in the application of the principles of eternal life. It is often said of him that he lived the gospel so perfectly himself, and taught it so plainly to others, that it was impossible for him to remain longer in the flesh; that like certain holy men of old his great faith, the fruits of a Godly life, made it impossible to longer withold his redemption. The progress he made in securing an education in the things of eternity—his life's greatest desire and aim—was very directly spoken of at his funeral in the remarks of President Brigham Young, who said: "Some people would have to live to be a hundred years of age to be as ripe in the things of God as was Brother Grant; as was the spirit which lately inhabited this deserted earthly tabernacle. There are but few that can ripen for the glory, the immortality that is prepared for the faithful; for receiving all that was purchased for him by the Son of God, but very few can receive what Brother Grant has received in his life time. He has been in the Church upwards of twenty-four years, and was a man that would live, comparatively speaking, a hundred years in that time. The storehouse that was prepared in him to receive the truth was capable of receiving as much in twenty-five years as most of men can in one hundred." His career, which it is the purpose of this sketch to portray, so far as the very meagre record of it has been made and is accessible to us, fully sustains the observations quoted, and reveals a sublime character, one of the noblest of the earth, engaged in the highest and worthiest labor that such can be called unto. Before passing on to the events of his life let us contemplate the appearance of his person, as it has been described from a portrait. It exhibits him in the full vigor and power of manhood. The face is one of great force and distinguished appearance. In this respect, however, those who knew him say no picture could do him justice. His figure was tall and graceful, and his address pleasant. He is said to have been always smiling when he was not angry; his anger, no man would care to meet.

Jedediah Morgan Grant was the son of Joshua and Thalia Grant, and was born in Windsor, Broome County, New York, February 21, 1816. We have been unable to procure definite intelligence of his childhood and education, but the foundation for mental

pursuits and the love of books and study was evidently laid at that early period of life, before he appeared as a candidate for baptism in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He was baptized by John F. Boynton, afterwards one of the Apostles, on the 21st of March, 1833. In the spring of the following year, when he was eighteen years of age, he accompanied "Zion's Camp" in their wonderful march to Missouri; "and in the fatigues, privations, trying scenes and arduous labors endured by that handful of valiant men exhibited a goodly portion, for one so young, of that integrity, zeal, and unwavering effort and consistency in behalf of the cause of truth, that invariably characterized his life." The experience obtained, on this memorable journey, was such as few ever pass through in life, and proved him a hero of the first quality, who had laid foundation stones of life on which he could forever build.

On returning to Kirtland Brother Grant was ordained an elder and appointed, in connection with Elder Harvey Stanley, to his first preaching mission. They started May 22, 1835, and spent the summer in the labors of the ministry, preaching and baptizing converts. In the winter of 1835-6 Brother Grant assisted in the labors upon the Kirtland temple, where he received the blessings of the house of the Lord. He was appointed to a mission in the east, but participated, before leaving the Temple, in the great manifestations of the power and glory of God, which characterized the labors there from the time of its dedication, March 27, 1836, until the elders, who were then called to go on missions, departed for their fields. He was among that happy number who received from the lips of the prophet so much valuable counsel and instruction relating to the duties of the priesthood, and the following admonition, which has served as a guide to faithful and wise missionaries ever since. The ordinance of washing of feet had been attended to, when the Prophet spoke, saying that: "The time we were required to tarry in Kirtland to be endowed, would be fulfilled in a few days and then the elders would go forth and each must stand for himself, as it was not necessary for them to be sent out two by two, as in former times; but to go in all meekness, in sobriety, and preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified; not to contend with others on account of their faith or systems of religion, but to pursue a steady course. This I delivered by way of commandment, and all who observe it not will pull down persecution upon their heads, while those who do shall always be filled with the Holy Ghost; this I pronounce as a prophecy and seal it with hosanna and amen."

On the 13th of April, 1836, Brother Grant started upon his mission, going to New York state, where he preached a great deal in many places and raised up a branch of the Church at Fallsburg, baptizing twenty-three persons, among them his brother Austin. He returned to Kirtland on the 6th of March,

1837, and remained until the sixth of the following June when he commenced a missionary tour to the south—the field in which his greatest missionary labors and achievements were accomplished. He passed through the states of Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, etc., and reached North Carolina, where he labored assiduously, proclaiming the gospel in court houses, chapels and other places of assembly as frequently as circumstances permitted. He became extensively known and acquired considerable fame, as an adroit scriptorian and debater, in certain discussions held with Methodist divines whom he never feared nor declined to meet. His uniform success in overthrowing their sophistry and false theology by the forcible and conclusive way he presented the truth, won many friends and some converts. On the conclusion of this mission he returned to Kirtland and made preparations for final removal to Missouri. Starting October 9, 1838, he arrived at Far West on the 12th of November. He called at this time at Richmond jail to see his brother George D. Grant, to whom he had previously first presented the gospel, and who was then imprisoned with the prophet and others on account of their religious faith. Brother Grant passed through the trials of the expulsion from Missouri, being driven, with his father's family from Far West to Illinois; they located in Knox county, where he remained several months preaching and baptizing.

On the 12th of May, 1839, he made a trip to the site of the beautiful City of Joseph (Nauvoo) but hastened to Quincy to attend a conference held there on the first of June, at which time he was called on a mission to Virginia and North Carolina. This was the signal for opening the Southern States mission in earnest. With the elders associated with him, among them his brother Joshua, an extensive field was at once occupied, meetings were held in all available places, baptisms were quite numerous and several large branches were organized. At Burks Garden, Tazewell County, Virginia, where Brother Grant made headquarters, a branch of more than sixty members soon sprang up and great interest was excited by the populace in the labors of the traveling elders and local priesthood. Brother Grant's name was everywhere spoken of; his ready speech, logical argument, fearless and daring denunciation of sin, powerful exhortations to repentance and testimony of the restoration of the gospel were taken up by rich and poor, high and low, and commented upon. They won many converts and left impressions on many others which are fresh in their memories even to the present time. Many very interesting episodes marked this active, incessantly laborious period of his life. Among others one which led to a painful and disagreeable accident, resulting in breaking the bones of his nose.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 6, 1921.

EDITORIAL:

FAST OFFERINGS.

"WILL a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings" (Malachi 3: 8).

Besides in observing the established and defined law of tithing, which is enjoined upon all members of the Church, there are other opportunities provided for serving the Lord with our means in a manner approved of Him and to call down his blessing. Among these the payment of fast-offerings is one of the most simple, beneficent and direct.

Fasting, upon certain occasions and for certain purposes has been a custom of the people of God from the very earliest ages. It was usually associated with times and occasions of mourning and repentance and confessions of sin. The most remarkable prolonged instance of personal fasting was that of Moses on Mount Sinai, "And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments" (Exodus 34: 28). This, of course, was exceptional. Nothing like it had previously occurred, though no doubt the patriarchs fasted with their mournings, of which record is frequently made. The other Scriptural instance of a prolonged fast for a special purpose, is that of the Savior, when he was led up into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, and fasted forty days and nights. Apart from these special, miraculous instances, days of fasting, to be observed by the people, were not uncommon. A notable instance was at Mizpeh, when Israel was sorely beset by the Philistines and sought the favor of the Lord through a day of fasting and offering and the prayers of Samuel the prophet, which were heard and accepted and led to the discomfiting of the enemy and triumph of the people. Often when threatened by their enemies with destruction, and in face of prospective calamity, the fear of the people would lead them to seek their prophets and leaders, whose practice was to proclaim a fast and with offerings and prayers seek the Lord for help and deliverance. There is the splendid story of King Jehoshaphat, who set himself to seek the Lord, and who proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah, told in II. Chronicles, chapter twenty; and of Ezra at the river of Ahava, "that we might offer ourselves before our God to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little

ones, and for all our substance." It has not always been for triumph over their enemies that fasts were proclaimed. This practice indeed was reproved, and a more worthy purpose indicated in the fast recorded by the Prophet Isaiah: "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" (Isaiah 58: 6, 7).

These quotations from the Bible, and many other instances like that of the people of Nineveh, who proclaimed a fast and by repentance of their sins averted the predicted destruction of their city, all indicate the faith of the people in the virtue of denying themselves food and in making offerings with their prayers before the Lord to secure blessings. The Book of Mormon contains many similar accounts of this practice. A case somewhat different and of great interest is that relating to the conversion of the son of Alma the prophet, for whom the multitude assembled "and fasted and prayed for the space of two days and two nights, * * * and he stood up and began to speak unto them bidding them to be of good comfort. For, said he, I have repented of my sins and have been redeemed of the Lord; behold, I am born of the Spirit."

However efficacious and worthy the application of this custom was, when properly sought in a spirit of humility, there came a time when both the people of Palestine, and of America made a mockery of it; and in a display of vanity and self-glorification their priests, and professors of religion and others, would appear before the people affectedly sorrowing for sins, and with assumed heroism endure the pangs of hunger for conscience sake. The counterpart of such dissimulation has been recently witnessed in what is known as the hunger-strikes of notoriety-seeking people, imprisoned for crimes, protesting against the laws and powers that punish them. The Lord very emphatically rebuked all such when he said, instructing his disciples in the sermon on the Mount: "Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face: that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6: 16-18).

In the practice of fasting there is of necessity a saving. The food that would otherwise be consumed was in the olden times no doubt included in the offerings, though it was not all that was offered; there was the sacrifice of beasts and birds as well. It was the ancient custom, and appears to have always had the sanction and approval of God, for the two observances of fasting and

offering to go together, though there might be exceptional instances of fasting, with no provision of offering or making use of the substance saved.

The merit of this venerable custom was revealed early to the Church in these latter days, and there have been certain occasions in our history when a general fast has been proclaimed, and the people were bidden to a solemn assembly to call upon the Lord in mighty prayer for blessings, helps and deliverances from danger and troubles that could not be averted, except through divine favor and blessing. Remarkable answers have been witnessed in response to these appeals. It is not, however, upon such special occasions that the favor and blessing of the Lord have been most notable. It has rather been and is, in the regular establishment of a set day of fasting, with its accompanying offerings and prayers. For many years the day so designated as fast-day among the Latter-day Saints was the first Thursday of each month. This was to be observed in all the wards and branches of the Church by the people meeting in short services of prayer and instruction and bearing testimony, conducted by the local officials, whose duty has also been to receive the offerings of the people. These have been either in produce or money, and sometimes labor, consecrated and nsed for the benefit of the poor, and distributed to their relief by the local priesthood having intimate knowledge of their condition and needs. This day and custom is still faithfully observed, except that the day has for a number of years past been changed to the first Sunday in each month instead of Thursday, as being more convenient for the meetings and other observances of the day.

Fast-day in its full meaning is one of the most gracious and splendid observances of the Church. The abstention from food one day in the month is itself a hygienic measure of great benefit to the human anatomy. A brief rest of the digestive system strengthens it, and gives zest to its functions that contributes to health and its enjoyment. The moral stimulus derived from a voluntary self-control and denial of one's appetite for food is of high importance, and becomes delightful to those who practice it. To take note of the Lord's injunction to "anoint thy head and wash thy face" and not appear to fast before men, brings with it an inner consciousness of accord with Him that is sweet and heavenly, for he has said that he seeth in secret and will reward all such openly. The employment of the fast-day offerings, which by common consent of the saints equal the amount or cost of the day's food saved, goes a long way towards providing for the poor. If every family strictly observed to fast, and honestly contributed the whole of the savings, the poor would be so well taken care of that they would hardly know they were poor. Indeed, the universal practice would do away with extreme poverty and make the people more equally comfortable and happy.

This fact is proved over and over again in certain wards and branches. It supplied Senator Reed Smoot with an argument before the Senate, at the time the United States was appealed to for food and clothing to alleviate the distress of Europe during the Great War. He produced figures to show that if the families of America would observe the Latter-day Saints' fast-day means enough would be saved to provide abundantly for the needs of the famished in Europe during that period.

As individuals and branches, wards and communities of Latter-day Saints, we are greatly honored and blessed in keeping this ancient and splendid custom prescribed by the Almighty. Not only in the direct and divers benefits to ourselves and the relief of our fellow creatures who are in need; but in setting an example before the world of the beneficent means the Lord has revealed for the temporal salvation of his children.

J. F. W.

GOLD PLATES IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

"THERE are many hidden records in the earth to-day, which if revealed to mankind would enable them to make a better translation of the Bible." These were the words of Professor Skeet in a lecture given a number of visitors at the British museum, London, recently. The writer, who by chance happened to be one of the party, listened eagerly to the learned man relate "The history of Manuscripts." The tour commenced with the stone age. The audience was shown the library of Assur Bani Pal, ancient king of Assyria. The tiny stone tablets told of the flood, which made even a Jewish Rabbi remark, "that's a good proof of the authenticity of the Old Testament." The next room contained mummies of Egypt and papyrus rolls, the earliest known form of paper. These relics of the past made an interesting exhibit, reminding one of the drawings in the Pearl of Great Price. Passing on to the largest room in the museum, gods of stone, towering high in the air, were seen. The professor explained that some of the half-man and half-animal figures represented the Pagan beliefs of God. The Rosetta stone, famed the world over, contained hieroglyphic inscriptions, which have been successfully deciphered. Passing to a later period the Hebrew bible was shown, also parts of a record which were found, after the King James translation was made. This was written in Christ's time and translated states: "He who hearkens unto Thy word will have everlasting life." This it was explained proves the authenticity of the New Testament. Had it been brought to light earlier it would have aided in a better translation. The writing was carved on thin slabs of wood, worm-eaten with age.

Glass cases in another room contained costly Chinese manuscripts, showing the very first printing, A. D. 1099, from characters

of the 40,000 Chinese alphabet. Professor Skeet explained how bamboo took the place of papyrus and later silk. He told of the first real paper made from India palm-leaf strips, with cord holding the pages together. After commenting on the fine handiwork of illuminated manuscripts, the Arabic and eighth century Armenian, he explained that the first dated book was written in Odessa A.D., 411. The two oldest scraps of paper in the world, silk envelopes, made in the first and second centuries by the Chinese, were also shown. The story of the introduction and the use of paper in Cairo in 977 was also related by Professor Skeet.

By this time a case, purposely passed, had attracted attention, and the professor made his way towards it, stating that he would show the crowning achievement in the art of manuscripts. Every eye peered forward, for in the case were plates of ivory, silver and gold. The educated guide explained how in early days the characters had been inscribed with a sharp pointed instrument on thin sheets of metal, usually brass. "But," said he, "to write on thin sheeted plates of gold surpasses all we have seen, for the hieroglyphics are as plain as when first written, making translation easy. These writings will last forever, and if we had more like them a better translation of the Bible could be made." The plates of gold were about thirteen inches long and three inches wide, bound together with small metal rings. The writer tried to question him as to what the plates signified, but the professor, thinking he had made a fitting conclusion and would be late for dinner, hurried away. The interested audience, however, stayed on, especially one who had found a surviving testimony of the existence of real gold plates, such as those from which the translation of The Book of Mormon was made.

Passing on after silent meditation the writer viewed the signatures of Shakespeare, the writings of Byron, Tennyson, Burns, Scott, Dickens, Milton, Raleigh, Pope, Defoe, and even the original Magna Charta, written in 1215. But he could not forget the gold plates. So, after making handwriting imitations he returned to take a final look at what he had hoped, for years, that he might sometime see.

HAROLD H. JENSON.

THREE SNOWFALLS.

MY missionary labors have taken me to Hokkaido, the large northern island of the Japanese archipelago. Winter has set in. Outside it is bleak and cold. Snow has been trying to pile up, as it has done in former years. Recently, I mused as I sat by a warm fire, gazing out at Nature's attempts to accumulate an abundance of the pure, white precipitation. Off and on for days, tiny flakes had come lazily fluttering downward from a hazy and

indifferent overhead. So sparse and minute were they, and so hesitatingly did they descend, that they counted for nothing. Like little flickering lights they barely bumped on the earth and went out. Then came a sudden change. Infuriated gusts swept down from the polar regions, heedlessly hurling the descending snow-flakes into out-of-way nooks or piling them on the dark, damp side of opposing objects, leaving them there probably to melt before the next drift came. And although this blustering, boreal action continued for a couple of days, the ground was not completely covered with snow. Finally the wind ceased. The black, drifting clouds united, and a heavy and steady precipitation ensued. There was neither hesitancy nor blustering in this third snowfall. Determination was back of every particle. In a few brief hours several inches of snow had accumulated, everywhere the depth being the same.

As I sat looking out on the uniform layer of snow, a paragraph by that influential British writer and moralist, Samuel Smiles, which I had recently read, came vividly to my mind, and immediately I recognized a lesson in what I had seen—another valuable lesson from that venerable, old teacher, Nature. I quote the passage from Smiles that I might the better pass on the lesson of the three snowfalls:

> The several acts may seem in themselves trivial; but so are the continuous acts of daily life. Like snowflakes they fall unperceived; each flake added to the pile produces no perceptible change, and yet the accumulation of snowflakes makes the avalanche. So do repeated acts, one following another, at length become consolidated into habit, determining the action of the human being for good or for evil, and, in a word, form the character (*Character*, p. 40).

Each of the three snowfalls suggests a mood and a method in human beings. Each snowflake represents one of the acts that "become consolidated in habit" and "form the character." He who would aspire to true greatness, let him remember how the snow accumulates.—A. Ray Olpin, in *Improvement Era.*

AN AIM IN LIFE.

Do we have an aim in life? Have we ever asked ourselves that question, or have we carelessly and listlessly passed along in the stream of life following the current? It is a grave question, that requires our earnest consideration. When we peruse the biographies of great and good men and women, and learn how they attained to that standard which made them renowned, we find they one and all, had an aim in life; they did not spring into greatness and importance at one stride, but they had a fixed purpose, an aim if you please; labored to that end and had the fortitude and perseverance to reach it.

There are, comparatively speaking, but few men and women who make history; the great majority are born, they live, they die, and that is the last we hear of them; many take but little more interest in this life and their surroundings, saying nothing about the life to come, than do the brutes. It is a hard saying, but nevertheless true. If we have no more ambition about our welfare and future destiny than some manifest, we would never attain to anything of worth either here or hereafter. It requires something more than brute courage to labor diligently and persistently in spite of all earthly obstacles and failures to secure success; it requires nerve and faith, and a great deal of it.

Let us have an aim in life, and let it be high; then have the pluck and perseverance to reach it. We hold our destiny in our own hands. We have no time to spare to pass away in idleness and indolence. We must be up and doing and ever watchful to employ the time, the fast and fleeting moments profitably. A day, an hour, or a minute wasted cannot be recalled; if we wish to make up for lost time we will have to labor all the harder and be not discouraged. In ascending the moral mountains to greatness and glory, we should keep a steady eye on the summit, never looking back, for should we do so, we are liable to become dizzy and lose our footing.

We expect as Latter-day Saints, when we pass from this mortal sphere, to be saved with the just, in the presence of our Heavenly Father, and we console ourselves with the idea that He is a merci- Father, which we have repeated proofs of daily, but while He is merciful, we must also remember that He is just. Our aim should be to abide His justice and love His mercy.

JOHN A. HELLSTROM.

THE DEATH OF MOZART.

WHILE the great composer was finishing the famous opera, the "Magic Flute," in the summer of 1791, he was called upon by a mysterious stranger and commissioned to write a Requiem Mass, which should be finished in a month. This time having passed, and as he was setting out upon his journey from Vienna to Prague to see his opera produced, the stranger suddenly appeared and reminded him of his promise. The incident made a great impression upon Mozart, and the idea took possession of his fevered brain that it was a summons from the other world, and that his days were numbered. This notion grew upon him as he worked upon the requiem, and he felt, as he said himself, that he was writing it for himself. It was near the end of the year when he finished the work. He died at midnight on the 4th of December, 1791.

The closing scene in the life of Mozart, is one of the most

touching ever recorded. He seems to have suffered all his life from the fear of death. He had been employed upon his "requiem" several weeks, all the while his soul was filled with the richest melody. After giving to his requiem its last touch, and breathing into it the soul of undying harmony, which was to consecrate it through all time as his cygnean strain, he fell into a gentle slumber. At length the light footstep of his daughter Emily awoke him. "Come hither, my Emily," he said; "my task is done, the requiem, my requiem is finished." "Say not so, dear father," said the gentle girl, as the tears stood in her large and lustrous eyes; "you must be better, father, for even now there is a glow upon your cheek."

"Do not deceive yourself my darling child," said the dying father; "this wasted form can never be restored by human aid; to God alone I look for help in this my dying hour. My Emily," continued the father, "take these last notes and sit down by the piano and sing them to me with the hymn of thy sainted mother. Let me hear those dear tones once more which have so long been my solace and delight."

The daughter sat down and, with a voice enriched with tenderest emotion, sang the following lines:

Spirit, thy labor is o'er;
Thy earthly probation is run;
Thy steps are now bound for the untrodden shore,
And the race of immortals begun.

Spirit, look not on the strife
Or the pleasures of earth with regret—
Pause not on the threshold of limitless life
To mourn for the day that is set.

Spirit, no fetter can bind,
No wicked have power to molest;
There the weary, like thee, the wretched shall find
A haven—a mansion of rest.

Spirit, how bright is the road,
For which thou art now on the wing;
Thy home it will be with thy father and God,
Their loud alleluiahs to sing.

As she concluded, she dwelt for a moment upon the low melancholy notes of the piece, and then, turning from the piano, looked in silence for the approving smile of her father. It was the still passionless smile, which the rapt and joyous spirit had left, with the seal of death upon those beautiful features; for the great musician was dead.

FAITH draws the poison from every grief, takes the sting from every loss, and quenches the fire of every pain; and only faith can do it.—DR. HOLLAND.

FROM THE MISSION FIELD.

Social.—An enjoyable evening was spent on Saturday, December 11th, 1920, at Sheffield, when the Relief Society sisters gave a grand "tea" and social in aid of the Relief Society. A splendid program was rendered, consisting of musical selections, songs, recitations, etc., after which the time was turned over to games. Many friends were present, and seemed to enjoy the entertainment.

Open-air Meetings.—Our open-air meetings in the various parks of London, on December 26th, 1920, were very successful. Especially was this so at Hyde Park, Finsbury Park, and Clapham Common. In each of these places over five hundred people assembled to hear the elders. A great deal of prejudice is being removed, and many friends are being made through these meetings.

Baptisms.—A baptismal service was held at Deseret on Sunday, December 20th, 1920, at which two souls were added to the fold. The first came from Dover, and was baptized by Elder Richard Williams, Jr. The other was from Hammersmith, and was baptized by Elder Andre K. Anastasiou. This member is a Russian, born and reared in Odessa, but is thoroughly converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ. They were both confirmed by President James Gunn McKay.

Monday, December 27th, 1920, a baptismal service was held at Sittingbourne, Kent, when Elder Leigh W. Clark baptized one candidate.

DIED.

WELCH.—Sarah Ann Sharman Welch. December 7th, 1920. Although not a member of the Church, she had been a great help in the Leicester branch, entertaining the elders and making life pleasant for them. She had eleven children. Four daughters and one son, are members of the Church. President Virgil B. Stallings presided at the funeral, assisted by Elder Abraham Noble and wife.

CONTENTS:

New Year's Greeting 1
Jedediah M. Grant (I) 4
Editorial: Fast Offerings ... 8
Gold Plates in the British Museum... 11
Three Snowfalls 12
An Aim in Life 13
The Death of Mozart 14
From the Mission Field 16

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